

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus* in Senegal in December 2003

Richard Cruse

Un Pouillot à grands sourcils *Phylloscopus inornatus* au Sénégal en décembre 2003. Un Pouillot à grands sourcils *Phylloscopus inornatus* a été observé près de St Louis, au nord du Sénégal, le 6 décembre 2003, dans une ronde d'insectivores. Ceci constitue la première mention documentée pour l'Afrique sub-Saharienne. Urban *et al.* (1997) mentionnent un oiseau bagué à Podor en septembre 1987, également dans le nord sénégalais, mais les détails n'ont jamais été publiés. L'espèce niche en Sibérie et hiverne principalement en Asie du Sud et du Sud-est; toutefois, elle atteint régulièrement l'Europe et le Moyen Orient. Elle est accidentelle en Afrique du Nord et dans les Îles Canaries. Un afflux record a eu lieu en Europe occidentale à l'automne 2003, ce qui pourrait expliquer la présence de l'espèce au Sénégal.

In the morning of 6 December 2003, Richard & Jan Brown, John Isaac and I were birding the tree-lined tracks alongside the banks of a tributary of the Senegal River near St Louis in northern Senegal. Conditions were clear and sunny. We found a mixed-species flock feeding in the *Acacia* and *Tamarix* trees, containing Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*, Melodious Warbler *Hippolais polyglotta*, Western Olivaceous Warbler *H. [pallida] opaca* and Grey-backed Camaroptera *Camaroptera brachyura*. While watching the chiffchaff I noticed another small *Phylloscopus* and pointed it out to my companions. The bird was quite conspicuous as it had two bright yellow wingbars. It was noticeably smaller than the chiffchaff and had a greenish head and upperparts, with a long, bright yellow supercilium, no noticeable crown-stripe, and dirty whitish underparts. The primaries appeared dark. We watched it for a short time before the flock moved off, not to be seen again. We identified the bird as Yellow-browed Warbler *P. inornatus*. The close proximity of the chiffchaff made the identification relatively easy. A few weeks previously I had seen a Yellow-browed Warbler in the hand at a ringing station in Estonia. Furthermore, I observed a similar warbler, with conspicuous double wingbars, in nearby Djoudj National Park, Senegal, on 25 November 2002, but as the views were very brief, I was unable to claim it.

Yellow-browed Warbler is not mentioned for Senegal in Morel & Morel (1990), nor in the more recent identification guides of Barlow *et al.* (1997) and Borrow & Demey (2001). Urban *et al.* (1997)

mentioned one ringed by J. Berlem at Podor, in northern Senegal, in September 1987, but no details have been published. The present sighting thus appears to be the first detailed record of this Siberian passerine from sub-Saharan Africa. It normally winters in southern Asia, but regularly reaches Europe and the Near East, mostly in mid-September and October (Cramp 1992), with pronounced influxes in some years. It is a vagrant to North Africa, with records from Egypt (two, October 1966 and 1969; one, March 1982: Goodman & Meininger 1989), Libya (one, November 1967: Bundy 1976), Algeria (three, October 1985: Isenmann & Moali 2000), Morocco (singles, November 1988 and October 1994: Thévenot *et al.* 2003), and the Canary Islands (13 records, November–March, on Lanzarote, Fuerteventura and Tenerife, in 1978–1997: Martin & Lorenzo 2001).

There was a record influx of Yellow-browed Warblers in western Europe in autumn 2003, with unprecedented numbers reported in Scandinavia, the Netherlands, France and Britain (van den Berg 2003, 2004), and this may also explain the species' presence in Senegal during the same general period. It seems plausible to suggest that Yellow-browed Warblers passing through Western Europe could migrate with Common Chiffchaffs to the Sahel.

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106 rue Navarrot, 64400 Oloron-Sainte-Marie,
France. E-mail: rmbc@wanadoo.fr